

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 948
By Turner L

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend senior citizen Johnnie Evans upon her triumphant receipt of a bachelor's degree from the University of Memphis.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of the General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those students who, through their natural talents and unflagging commitment to academic excellence, have distinguished themselves in the classroom despite unusual hardships and challenges; and

WHEREAS, through diligent study, steady composure during examinations, and steadfast commitment of time and talent, Johnnie Evans, a sixty-two-year-old grandmother, achieved remarkable success in her academic endeavors; and

WHEREAS, not only was she four decades older than the traditional students in her classroom, Johnnie Evans persevered and endured being sidelined three times with life-threatening illnesses to graduate triumphantly in December of 2004 with a bachelor's degree from the University of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, when Mrs. Evans was thirty-four years old and the mother of three small children, she did not wake up after falling asleep; her husband performed CPR and called an ambulance to take her to the hospital, where her arrival turned into an extensive stay, following what was diagnosed as an aneurysm; and

WHEREAS, during the next twenty-four years, Johnnie Evans was treated for and recovered from two more debilitating aneurysms, and after that suffered two strokes; amazingly, she enrolled at the University of Memphis in 1996, finally completing the requirements for her bachelor's degree in Professional Studies/Criminal Justice and Counseling eight years later in between periods of recovery and physical therapy; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Evans is currently searching for a job in counseling or customer service and plans to write a book with a working title of *It Could Have Been You*; in describing her experience, she hopes to encourage others not to falter, despite setbacks, in the quest to meet their personal goals; and

WHEREAS, Johnnie Evans was rightly honored last year at the American Heart Association's Heart and Soul Ball, where she was recognized for her academic and personal achievements by University of Memphis President Dr. Shirley Brown; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Evans's and her display of intellectual aptitude, steadfast dedication, and indefatigable determination surely bode well for her future success; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Evans's noteworthy achievement is a tremendous source of pride for her family, her school, her church, and her community; she is most appreciative of the unflagging love and support she has consistently received from them through the years, particularly from her church family at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church of Westwood; and

WHEREAS, Johnnie Evans's dedication to excellence is clearly deserving of the respect, admiration, and commendation of the legislative body; she epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Johnnie Evans upon her triumphant receipt, despite arduous challenges, of a bachelor's degree from the University of Memphis. We congratulate her on her impressive accomplishments and steadfast dedication to academic achievement in the face of hardship and extend to her our best wishes for a happy, successful future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of the resolution be prepared for presentation with the final clause omitted from such copy.